PALMAE MALESICAE

II. *Nenga Wendlandiana* Scheff. or *Nenga pumila* (Mart.) Wendl?

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There seems to be some doubt which of these two names should be regarded as a synonym, and as the current usage and the authority of some specialists seem to clash with certain well-established nomenclatorial principles an inquiry into the question was undertaken and the results are reported here.

In 1832 MARTIUS published in the *Historia Naturalis Palmarum* many new species of palms among which were *Areca pumila* (without author's name) and *Areca nenga* Bl. (4, pp. 177, 179). The first was fully described and contained an illustration of the plant from which Martius had worked out the description. Apparently the trivial name *pumila* was taken from Blume's manuscript notes or synoptic diagnosis which were supplied to him and which were also quoted in the synonymy of the species, for Martius had realised that there was some discrepancy between his diagnosis and the one supplied to him by Blume. The other species, *Areca nenga*, was one that Martius did not know and the name and the diagnosis were published as supplied by Blume.

In 1836 BLUME (2) published the second volume of his *Rumphia* where he tried to show that Martius had misinterpreted his manuscript species and that *Areca pumila* as described and illustrated by Martius was identical with the plant Blume had called *A. nenga* and which he (Blume) now fully described and illustrated under the newly created genus *Pinanga* as *P. nenga* (2, p. 78, t. 107). Blume further produced a full description and a plate of the plant to which he had intended to apply the name *A. pumila* and to which, according to him, the name should in future be reserved (2, p. 71, tt. 99 & 102 C).

In 1848 (?) MARTIUS (5) published an *Appendix* to his *Historia* where he rejected the genus *Pinanga* of Blume, reduced *Areca nenga* Bl. *apud* Mart. and *Pinanga nenga* Bl. as synonyms of *Areca pumila* Mart. and made *A. pumila* Bl. (*non* Mart.) a variety of *A. triandra* Roxb. This disposition was generally accepted by subsequent botanists until the year 1871 when SCHEFFER (6, p. 166) produced reasons for accepting with minor restrictions the genera *Areca* and *Pinanga* as defined by Blume and also for keeping *A. pumila* Bl. (*haud* Mart.) as a species distinct from *Areca triandra* Roxb. Scheffer, be it noted, was not a strict subscriber to the priority principles and so he took *A. pumila* Bl. (*haud* Mart.) as a valid name for the palm

especially as *A. pumila* Mart. had another name in *A. nenga* Bl., a species retained by him under the genus *Areca*. In 1875 WENDLAND and DRUDE (9, p. 182) conjointly published a new genus *Nenga* with *Pinanga nenga* Bl. as the type species, but omitted to make any new combination under it. In 1876 SCHEFFER (7, p. 25) supplied the name *Nenga Wendlandiana* for the species *Pinanga nenga* Bl. under the new genus apparently because the combination *Nenga nenga* was not permissible under the existing rules or usage. It is clear that he did not inquire into the matter whether or not *Nenga pumila* was admissible; in fact he does not quote *A. pumila* Mart. as a synonym of *Nenga Wendlandiana*, though he quotes other names which, according to him, are synonyms. In 1878 WENDLAND (8, p. 251), who strictly respected the priority rule, made a new combination of *A. pumila* Mart. (*haud* Blume) under *Nenga*, quoting *Nenga Wendlandiana* Scheff. as a synonym. In 1885 BECCARI (1, p. 83) opined that Wendland was wrong in making the combination because *A. pumila* Mart. (*nec*. Blume) was invalid being based on a misinterpretation of Blume's *A. pumila;* and in this opinion Beccari has been followed by many botanists. But as historically the Blumean interpretation came later than that of Martius, an inquiry into the exact status of *Areca pumila* in Martius's *Historia* seems to be necessary before accepting or rejecting any names or interpretations of the new species published in it

When Martius was working out palms for the *Historia*, Blume communicated to him descriptions of some new species to be published in it. These descriptions were often too short and vague to be of any use even to such an eminent palm specialist as Martius. When it was possible for Martius to identify Blume's (manuscript) species with the material in his own herbarium in Munich, he drew up the specific descriptions from this material only and, presumably, out of courtesy to Blume and perhaps with the view of helping palm students to identify Blume's manuscript names on the herbarium sheets, quoted Blume's manuscript names together with their insufficient or vague descriptions in the synonymy, adding in the citations Blume's localities and vernacular names which were supplied to him in letters. In such cases as these Martius apparently did not hesitate to reject Blume's trivial names if they described inadequately the species or if he had already provided names. Blume's *Euterpe filamentosa* was, for instance, rejected by Martius for what he described as *Areca nibung* (4, p. 173). In other cases when Martius could not recognise Blume's (manuscript) species in the material he had, he published them at the end of the chapter

under each genus where he also listed all dubious and imperfectly known species. Here the Blumean species contained the names and diagnoses exactly as Blume had supplied them to Martius and were therefore published entirely under Blume's responsibility (*e.g. Areca nenga* Bl. and *A. coronata* Bl.). Hence it is apparent that Martius used discretion in adopting or rejecting a manuscript name obtained from Blume, save when it was impossible to connect Blume's description with any material in his own herbarium, and then courtesy constrained him to publish the species with Blume's indifferent or inadequate diagnoses. And what is still more easily noticeable in the *Historia* is that when Martius considered Blume's manuscript descriptions applicable to herbarium material to which he had access, he made this material the basis of his descriptions and illustrations, though in the synonymy and in particulars relating to the habitat or distribution and vernacular names information supplied by Blume was added perhaps, as pointed above, out of courtesy to Blume and to make his book more useful to the palm students of his time. In modern phraseology one can safely say that the type of the descriptions or the species was the material to which Martius had access and not the one which formed the basis of Blume's descriptions quoted in the synonymy.

In the *Historia* one can therefore distinguish at once between the species published on Martius's entire responsibility, even though bearing names suggested by Blume's notes, and the species published wholly on Blume's responsibility. *Areca pumila* falls into the former category. Here Martius may have adopted the name suggested by Blume's manuscript notes because it appeared to him suitable, but the diagnostic characters and detailed description were drawn entirely from the specimen Martius had seen and for which he supplied a good plate. That he adopted Blume's manuscript name and in deference quoted Blume's brief, vague and slightly variant manuscript diagnosis in the synonymy, and in addition quoted at the end of the description the vernacular name and the locality of Blume's plant, should not cloud the fact that *Areca pumila* was not a preoccupied name and that Martius had supplied full details and figures of the species to which this name, till then not preoccupied, should be applied. In view of this it is clear that Martius's publication and reservation of the name for the species are valid and that the species is at the most *A. pumila* Bl. mss. ex. Mart. exclusiv. synon. *A. pumila* Bl. *in litt.* if not simply *A. pumila* Mart., and that its type is not Blume's specimen which Martius had not seen, but Reinwardt's which he had studied and of which he had supplied full details and a plate. One cannot discard

the species because in adopting Blume's manuscript name Martius had misinterpreted the manuscript species, for the author of a new species is not bound to ascertain the type of an unpublished manuscript name in the case he wishes to adopt it (the mauscript name) for the species he wishes to describe as new. The publisher is free to choose his own type independently of that selected by the author of the manuscript name. Nor can one disregard Martius's species on the ground that is is a *mixtum compositum,* for apart from the citation of one specimen, there is nothing in Martius's description or in Blume's description quoted in the synonymy to suggest that it is such a case, and there is an excellent plate to illustrate Martius's type. If a precedent is allowed to eliminate Martius's species because it does not correspond with the alleged type of the manuscript species quoted in the synonymy, though the species itself is fully described and illustrated, then I fear a tremendous slaughter of well known names will be unavoidable and botanical nomenclature will have to bear an unnecessary burden of thousands of additional names coined to replace the discarded ones. Even well known Linnean names may disappear since Linnæus himself had very often tried to identify his species with the ones already described by other authors and so his synonymy is very often found to be a mixture of various species.

But what reasons has one to say that, at the time of supplying the information to Martius, Blume himself was not confused over his *Areca pumila* and *A. nenga* and to maintain that the interpretation given in *Rumphia* is the one that Blume had originally given when transmitting his communications to Martius? What does Blume mean by informing Martius that his *Areca nenga* has distichous fruits and later identifying it with *A. pumila* Mart.? A palm with such characteristics can never be *A. pumila* Mart. or any other species of *Nenga* hitherto described. In fact *Pinanga nenga* Bl. is *Areca nenga* Bl. *apud* (or *in*) Mart. *pro parte,* since the description of the spadix is that of a genuine Pinanga as the genus is currently interpreted. Further as has already been noted by Martius (5, p. 312) Blume gives a figure in his plate showing a trilocular and triovulate ovary, though no mention of it is made in the text and in the generic description given by Blume only a one-locular and one-ovular ovary is indicated. The material from which this figure was drawn did not apparently belong to Blume's *Pinanga nenga,* unless Blume had with him some abnormal material.

A. pumila Mart. being valid it follows that *A. pumila* Bl. in *Rumphia* is invalid since it is not applied to the type of Martius. This means therefore that *Nenga pumila*

(Mart.) Wendl. is a valid combination having a better claim for usage over *Nenga Wendlandiana* Scheff. And that *A. pumila* Bl. in *Rumphia* requires a new name. This was found by me (3, p. 226) in the *Areca latiloba* Ridley, of which *A. pumila* Bl. is but a geographical form or a variety.

A note may here be added to show certain errors which have crept into botanical or horticultural literature concerning these two palms, *Areca pumila* Mart. and *A. pumila* Bl., owing to the disregard by some botanists of the priority rule. In the *Flores des Jardins* II (1859), 145, t. 10, Siebold and De Vriese treat the two binominals as if they represent only one species, *A. pumila* Bl.=*A. latiloba* Ridl., as the synonymy quoted and the plate given clearly indicate. In Bailey's *Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture,* (1917), the binominal *A. pumila* is quoted under *Nenga Wendlandiana* Scheff.=*N. pumila* Wendl. by two authors (N. Taylor and J. G. Smith) and in two places, but since in both these places the name of Blume is added after the binominal and since in one place the plate (*Bot.* Mag. t. 6025) of *A. pumila* Bl.=*A. latiloba* Ridl. is quoted in the synonymy of the *Nenga* species, it is evident that a mistake has been made in considering the two distinct plants *A. latiloba* Rild. and *N. pumila* Wendl., as only one species. In the *Index Kewensis* only the binominal published by Martius is recognized and Martius's plate is also cited, but Blume is regarded as the author of the species and so the homonym published by Blume in *Rumphia* has not been registered. In the *Index Londinensis* (1929) on the other hand, the illustrations of both *A. pumila* Mart. and of its homonym *A. pumila* Bl. are indexed under the first mentioned name.

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